

HANDBOOK OF DIFFERENTIAL DIAGNOSIS. By H. T. Hyman, M.D.

Second edition. (Pp. xxix + 716. 55s.) London: Lippincott, 1953.

THIS is an unusual book and of a type which will be strange to British readers. It starts with a section in which are listed 1,585 symptoms and signs. Reference to any one of these directs the reader to some one of the 232 divisions of differential diagnosis, alphabetically arranged. These divisions describe the various causes of the symptoms, give diagnostic criteria and brief details of each clinical syndrome, including therapeutic tests and suggestions for treatment.

According to the author, the book has been prepared for office and bedside use by practising physicians for specialists retaining a broad interest in clinical medicine and for those undergraduates, interns, and residents who aspire to creative careers in private and institutional practice.

While the reviewer would not quarrel with its value for experienced practitioners, he does not consider that undergraduates or recently qualified doctors would find this a useful or helpful presentation of diagnosis in medicine. For the inexperienced, the detail is too brief to be successful, and such briefness may carry its own dangers.

Much of the book, however, will be of practical help to the experienced doctor. Many of the sections contain valuable suggestions and are well written, although in a brief, staccato style.

A long section of ninety pages on occupational hazards and their diagnostic features requires radical pruning, if the real dangers of industry are not to be buried in a welter of irrelevant details.

In summary, therefore, this is an unusual and interesting presentation of differential diagnosis, best suited for brief reference by experienced doctors. It is well printed and produced, but, unfortunately, the price is high.

D. A. D. M.

REACTION TO INJURY (being No. 1 of Vol. 10 of "British Medical Bulletin").

(Pp. 1-72. 15s.) London: Medical Department, British Council, 165 Davies Street, 1954.

THIS collection of reviews discusses not only research work started during the Second World War, but shows that, in many directions, progress continues to be made. A wide variety of interests are represented, but radiation injuries are not discussed. Circulatory disturbances and their treatment in various types of injury, including burns, are discussed in three papers by F. C. Courtice, J. P. Bull, and R. T. Grant. The last author also contributes an all-too-short article on fat embolism. Medical men will perhaps be most interested in the discussions of the prolonged storage of blood and of the preparation of blood substitutes. These are certainly authoritative, with articles by P. L. Mollison, W. d'A. Maycock, and Margaret M. Mackay. Discussions of the biochemical changes following injury and of the experimental studies on demyelination are less profitable, and the brevity of the reviews often makes it difficult to follow the speculations indulged in. In other papers Professor G. Payling Wright shows the value of prophylactic tetanus toxoid for wounds, but Professor Oakley stresses the continuing need for adequate surgery to prevent gas gangrene. Ritchie Russell summarises recent studies on head injuries.

Many medical men will be interested in some of these articles, but there will be few with interests sufficiently wide to appreciate the symposium as a whole.

AIDS TO INORGANIC CHEMISTRY. By R. G. Austin, B.Sc.(Lond.), F.R.I.C.

Second edition. (Pp. x + 469; figs. 22. 10s. 6d.) London: Ballière, Tindall & Cox, 1953.

TO-DAY students of medicine are introduced to chemistry before they commence their medical course, and in that course little inorganic chemistry is taught or required. This book is a useful introduction, though the author claims that it is intended primarily for students who have already attended lectures on inorganic chemistry. It will be more useful as a book for revision than as a text-book. It may also find some place in medical laboratories as an easy reference to the composition of the more common chemical substances. Brief notes on the physiological action of many of the substances described are given and may interest the embryo medical student.